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Minutes 05_19_11

AYHSC Arlington Youth Health and Safety Coalition
May 19, 2011
Minutes

I. Welcome:

Members arrived to view multi-media designs created by AHS students. Members were informed of plans to continue discussions about these submissions at the end of the meeting, when voting would occur. Members in attendance: Cindy Bouvier, Carlene Newell, Ethel Doyle, Rebecca Wolfe, Cindy Sheridan Curran, Bryan Gallagher, Kathy Hirsh, Lynn Horgan, Colleen Leger.

II. Upcoming Volunteer Opportunities and Trainings

Colleen informed members of two volunteer opportunities in the month of June.

The first is the biennial Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS)* that will be administered at the Ottoson Middle School (OMS) on Wednesday, 6/8/11. Approximately 6-7 volunteers are needed for approximately an hour that day. Interested volunteers should arrive promptly at 8:00am, as the surveys will be given during first period. Volunteers will be assigned a hallway within each grade to distribute and collect surveys. Cindy B. stated that OMS parents were notified of the YRBS date via email, and that the information is also posted on the school's website. Both provided education about the survey and provided directions to follow should they decide not to have their children participate.

**Information about the YRBS: the Arlington Youth Health and Safety Coalition (AYHSC) collaborates with Northeast Health Resources to study health issues and risk factors among Ottoson Middle School students.~ The survey was also administered in 2002, 2006 and 2009. Questions on the survey address issues such as student alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use, in school and out of school activities, safety, coping with stress, gambling, sexual behavior (grade 7 & 8 only), diet, and exercise.~ The information gained through the survey will help us to develop better prevention and intervention programs and curricula.~ The information is critical in developing programs that meet students' needs. Students will not be asked to put their names on the questionnaire.~*

The second volunteer opportunity is on June 14th. Two to three volunteers will be needed to facilitate focus groups for the Tobacco Free Leadership Program. Diana Weisner of the Arlington Enrichment Collaborative (AEC) is in charge of registration. Students from the AEC program and OMS students will be invited to take part in the focus groups.

There are two upcoming trainings for interested Coalition members:

The first is a Certification for Prevention Specialists Information Session. This will take place on June 2nd from 1:00-2:30 at the Regional Center in Cambridge. The Prevention Specialist Certificate may be a requirement for future funding opportunities, so it might be something Coalition staff/members might want to consider. Colleen mentioned that she plans to attend and invited interested Coalition members to join as well.

The second training "Supporting Change with the Harm Reduction Model" will take place on June 2nd as well, from 9am-4am at Health Imperatives in Brookline.

Cindy B. told the group about an informational webinar that was offered about Alcohol EDU, an evidence-based, online alcohol prevention program for high school students. Cindy asked whether this might be a program the Coalition would offer, in partnership with AHS. Colleen and Cindy were going to learn more about the program.

III. Coalition Updates

Drug Take-Back Events: Colleen reported that the two recent drug take-back events were very successful, with over three gallons of controlled substances (pills, patches and liquids) collected, and over 200 gallons of other prescription and over-the-counter meds, and needles and other sharps collected and destroyed. All controlled substances were identified, counted and documented, and all containers were separated from their contents and recycled. Thanks to Coalition volunteers Bob Pasquierillo, Ethyl Doyle, and Rebecca Wolfe for their help at the events, and to Captain Bongiorno for overseeing both events. Colleen also expressed gratitude to the Arlington Community Media Inc. (ACMI) for covering the National Drug Take Back Initiative and promoting community outreach on their Government Access Channel. This was made possible thanks to Sara Alfaro-Franco, the Government Access Coordinator for ACMI, who has been eager to enhance awareness of the Coalition and other Health and Human Services programs and offerings.

Youth Initiative: Lynn coordinated with Elizabeth Oppedisano, SADD Coordinator at Arlington High School, to schedule visits with two SADD groups (peer leaders). Lynn attended each class and educated students on the 50/50/50 Social Norms Campaign and invited students to submit entries on behalf of the Robbins Library and Coalition partnership. Lynn commented that students were attentive and respectful, and that more than half of each class indicated they knew about AYHSC.

Shoulder Taps: Will take place in the near future, thanks to the support of youth coalition members from Somerville. This involves youth positioning themselves outside of liquor stores and asking people to buy alcohol for them. It is an opportunity to educate adults in the community to reduce underage access to alcohol. This is a new effort for the Coalition, and it might be good to reciprocate by having Arlington youth conduct shoulder taps in Somerville.

Compliance Checks: The Arlington Police Department will work with youth from Burlington, whom Lynn has identified, to conduct Compliance Checks at local restaurants and liquor stores in the upcoming weeks.

Diversion: Cindy C. summarized plans to work with C4RJ (Communities for Restorative Justice) to incorporate Restorative Justice practices into the Arlington Diversion program. A case has been selected to pilot this collaborative effort. This program brings all the stakeholders together (victim, offender, police, family members etc.) and aims to restore balance to the victim, get the offender back on track, and avoid future risky behaviors. Research shows this process is more satisfying to the victim than the court process. Cindy referenced C4rj.org for more information.

Community Outreach: Lynn mentioned that ACMI would like to interview Coalition members involved in tobacco-related education and programming at the Relay for Life event, on Saturday, May 21, 2011. Carlene offered to participate in the event and share tobacco prevention efforts that are underway at the AHS. Carlene will connect with AHS tobacco coordinator, Linda Mahoney to join her for this interview. Lynn offered to reach out to Mary DeCoursey. Mary, with Mt. Auburn, is working with the Coalition and the Arlington Enrichment Collaborative to implement the Tobacco Free Leadership Skills Program at Ottoson Middle School. The Sanborn Foundation will fund this initiative.

IV. AHS Multi-Media Social Norms Campaign

Coalition members spent the remaining meeting time examining social norms project submissions from the CADD students at AHS. The entries were posted on the wall and members were asked to select their top 8-10 designs. Members were asked to consider the specific criteria when making their selections- messages are positive and clear; messages highlight healthy behaviors; images are eye-catching; and images are appealing to young people. Coalition members commented on the creativity and talents of the students' efforts and inquired about the implementation plan for winning entries. A suggestion was made to preview all submissions at the Last Blast so that graduating seniors can identify designs they feel appeal to their peer group.

Members were thanked for all their hard work, and were reminded that the next general Coalition meeting would be in September. Great work this year, all!

V. Next Coalition Meeting: September 15, 2011

